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Information

Professional Services Committee

Discussion of Initial Institutional Approval Processes

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides information on the Commission's current Initial Institutional Approval process and proposes several clarifications and procedural modifications for Commission discussion.

Recommended Action: For information only

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Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation and performance of professional educators and for the accreditation of credential programs

October 2011

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Introduction

Accreditation of educator preparation programs is designed to ensure that educator preparation programs offered by institutions meet state-adopted standards of quality and effectiveness. One of the fundamental tenets of the Commission's accreditation system is that professional educators make professional judgments about the quality of educator preparation programs using a common set of expectations, or standards, to guide them in their work. This tenet is consistent with that used in other professions, such as medicine and law. The Commission's accreditation system includes initial institutional approval, program approval, and on-going accreditation activities. Responsibilities within the accreditation system are carried out by both the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation (COA). The COA is the Commission's delegated body of experts in the field of educator preparation whose primary responsibilities are to approve educator preparation programs, review accreditation visit reports and make decisions on the accreditation status for institutions. The purpose of each of these activities is to ensure that all institutions and programs are meeting the Commission's program standards of quality and effectiveness.

Recently, several issues relating to the process for initial institutional review and approval have been raised. This agenda item discusses those issues and suggests possible clarifications and modifications for the Commission's consideration.

Background Information about the Commission's Accreditation Process

In December 2010 a study session was presented that focused on the Commission's accreditation system, including the history of the review of educator preparation in California (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2010-12/2010-12-6E.pdf>). The Commission's accreditation system was reviewed and revised during 2004-2006 by the Accreditation Study Work Group (Work Group), an advisory panel of educators and those who prepare educators. A series of agenda items presented the recommendations from the Work Group which culminated in the Commission's adoption of a revised *Accreditation Framework* (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/PDF/accreditation_framework.pdf) in December 2007. The *Accreditation Framework* is the Commission's policy document on accreditation. Beginning with the 2007-08 year, accreditation site visits started once again for approved institutions after a six year hiatus. The December 2010 agenda item provided an update on the implementation of the revised system.

Appendix B provides the legal references and responsibilities for the accreditation process and for the *Accreditation Framework*.

In California, there are two key steps in the accreditation process that an institution or prospective program sponsor must complete prior to being Commission-approved to recommend individuals for credentials:

Initial Institutional Approval Process: This process applies to institutions that have either offered credential programs previously but not in California, and institutions that have not previously offered credential programs at all and want to offer one in California. In essence, this process determines whether an institution is *eligible* to offer an approved educator preparation program that leads to a credential program.

The institution submits responses to the Commission's Preconditions and Common Standards (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/program-standards.html>). Preconditions are based either in statute or in Commission policy. Elements contained within the Preconditions are typically clearly addressed or not addressed within the institution's response. For example, one of the Commission's 10 General Preconditions requires that "an institution/district that makes all personnel decisions without considering differences due to gender or other constitutionally or legally prohibited considerations." This precondition is often satisfied by an institution submitting a statement regarding its nondiscriminatory personnel policies accompanied by supporting documentation. The responses to the Preconditions are reviewed by staff and an entity must be found to meet the 10 General Preconditions prior to being recommended for Initial Institutional Approval.

Responses to the Common Standards are reviewed by trained peer reviewers. The peer reviewers are members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) and/or are experts in the field of educator preparation. The reviewers receive extensive initial training (four days) and subsequent follow-up training and recalibration for their responsibilities. There are over 400 members in the BIR pool at this time. In pairs, the peer reviewers read all materials and documentation submitted by the institution and assess the degree to which the information is sufficiently clear and complete. The pair of peer reviewers then work together to determine whether the plan and processes described by the institution meet each of the Common Standards. They discuss the program narrative and evidence provided and either 1) determine by consensus that the Common Standard is met, or 2) determine by consensus that more information is needed. If the pair of reviewers determines that additional information or evidence is needed, the two reviewers work together to develop language that would identify what questions they have or what additional information is still needed to adequately respond to the standards. If the two reviewers cannot reach consensus, a third reviewer maybe added to the review team.

Because of the level of complexity and detail required to demonstrate that an institution meets the Common Standards, it is usually the case that institutions new to the process are requested to submit additional information. The process is repeated until sufficient information is provided to determine that all Common Standards have been met. If and when all standards have been deemed to be met by the peer review, and the Preconditions have been found to be met through the staff review, the recommendation for Initial Institutional Accreditation is brought to the Commission for review and approval. The recommendation includes a brief description of the institution and has not, in the past, included the actual source documents such as the institution's response to the Common Standards and the Preconditions. In 2010, the Commission asked for more expanded information about the Precondition responses in agenda items. In response to this request,

staff has begun including a brief summary chart in relevant agenda items that describes how the institution has met the Commission's 10 General Preconditions.

Initial Program Review and Approval: The institution submits responses to the Commission's adopted Program Standards and program specific Preconditions for the intended educator preparation program. The program narrative is accompanied by documentation describing in detail the program that will be offered to candidates. The responses are reviewed by trained reviewers (see above for description of training and support for peer reviewers) and the initial decision about each of the program standards is communicated to Professional Services Division Accreditation staff. The process used for determining alignment with adopted program standards is similar to that previously described for determining alignment with adopted Common Standards. Reviewers work in pairs and together determine through consensus whether the program standards are sufficiently addressed or whether additional information is needed. Again, in almost all instances, additional information is requested from the institution. As with the Commission's General Preconditions, the program specific preconditions are reviewed by staff. If and when the institution has been determined by reviewers to meet the program standards and by staff to meet the preconditions, the staff then adds the program to the program approval item on the agenda for the next COA meeting.

The length of time for the complete review is influenced by the comprehensiveness and clarity of the initial responses submitted, whether the responses directly address the standard, whether the submission includes sufficient evidence needed to demonstrate alignment with the standard, and the amount of time the institution takes to respond to reviewers' requests for additional information. The process is also influenced by the reviewers' availability to review the responses to their requests for additional information after the initial review. These additional reviews take place electronically, rather than at the Commission offices. When reviewers are performing their initial reviews, they do so at the Commission offices with dedicated and protected time. However, they must do their secondary reviews of additional information while they are at home or at work without the benefit of dedicated or protected time to accomplish this work for the Commission. It is typical therefore, for each part of the initial institutional and program review processes to take several months. The particular schedule of the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation meetings also impacts the approval timeline.

Following completion of this two-step process, the institution and its programs become part of the ongoing accreditation system activities. Table 1 (Appendix A) outlines the current accreditation system and its activities. The institution is placed in an accreditation cohort and must participate in all on-going accreditation activities – biennial reports, program assessment, and site visit. All new program sponsors receive a technical assistance visit within two years of operation. In this manner, the Commission is able to monitor the quality of educational services being provided to candidates by a sponsor new to California's system without waiting an extended period of time for a full accreditation program assessment and site visit.

Issues Relating to the Initial Institutional Approval Process

At the August 2011 Commission meeting, an agenda item was presented relating to Initial Institutional Approval for an out of state institution seeking to be approved to provide educator preparation program leading to a California credential. This agenda item can be found at <http://www.etc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2011-08/2011-08-3D.pdf>. The particular circumstances of that institution's application caused the Commission to raise questions concerning the process and timing of the Initial Institutional Approval activities. The Commission directed staff to bring back a further agenda item relating to the questions raised and offer potential alternatives and/or solutions to these issues. Each of these issues is discussed below.

Issue: Institutional Authority vs. State (Commission) Oversight Authority

Under the Education Code, the Commission has the authority to determine the eligibility of institutions to offer approved educator preparation programs and to recommend issuance of credentials to candidates completing programs of preparation. This authority also applies to other program sponsors such as school districts, who were made eligible to sponsor professional educator preparation programs through subsequent legislation. The Commission modified the *Accreditation Framework* accordingly.

Education Code §44227(a) – The Commission may approve any institution of higher education whose teacher education program meets the standards prescribed by the Commission, to recommend to the Commission the issuance of credentials to persons who have successfully completed those programs.

Education Code §44372 – The powers and duties of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing regarding the accreditation system shall include the following:

(c) Rule on the eligibility of an applicant for accreditation when the applying institution has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California, pursuant to subdivision (a) of section 44227.

Education Code §44373(c) – The committee [Committee on Accreditation] shall do, but not be limited to doing all of the following:

(2) Make decisions about the initial accreditation of new programs of educator preparation in accordance with procedures adopted by the committee.

Accreditation Framework Section 4 A 1 – Initial Accreditation of Institutions. A postsecondary education institution that has not previously been declared eligible to offer credential preparation programs must submit an application to the Commission for initial professional accreditation. Institutional accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) or another regional accrediting body is required for initial professional accreditation by the Commission. The Commission may establish additional procedures and criteria for the initial professional accreditation of institutions to prepare and recommend candidates for state credentials in education.

The Commission does not appear to have the statutory authority, however, to regulate whether an institution may *begin* offering coursework or an educator preparation program prior to receiving

both initial institutional approval and program approval from the Commission. Statute is clear, however, that only those credentials recommended by Commission-approved programs will be granted.

Without the authority to prevent institutions from offering courses, the Commission is limited in terms of responses and actions with respect to an institution that begins operation of an educator preparation program prior to receiving Commission approval to do so under the *Accreditation Framework*, with the exception that the institution would not be able to recommend for the California credential. The Commission has and could continue to clarify and improve information that is provided to prospective program sponsors within the *Accreditation Handbook* and on the Commission's website concerning the Commission's accreditation requirements.

In the past, on the rare occasion that the Commission is made aware of an institution operating a program in which the institution is communicating erroneously to students that completion of the program would lead to a California credential, contact has been made with personnel at the institution to inform them that they need to stop communicating such information. In addition, the institution is told that to be an approved entity, it must comply fully with California's approval process.

However, more formal steps could be taken to document these communications. Some of these could include the following:

- Informing the institution in writing that the institution must comply fully with California's approval process.
- Informing the institution that it is not permitted to recommend candidates for a credential until or unless approval is received from the Commission.
- Advising the institution to inform all candidates that the preparation program is currently not approved by the Commission and that the institution cannot recommend candidates for any type of credential until or unless Commission approval is received.

While the Commission could advise a prospective program sponsor of all of the above, it is important to note that the Commission has no oversight or authority over institutions and programs not in the Commission's accreditation system. It is also important to note that the programs or coursework may be offered to candidates in California without the Commission necessarily being aware. The Commission could only take the above action once staff was aware of the situation.

A question has also been raised as to the Commission's ability to potentially impose a provisional approval, or any other disciplinary action, upon an institution that seeks Commission approval but does not follow the approval process as described above. Currently, the Commission's processes for initial institutional approval provide two options only – approval or denial of initial institutional eligibility. Given that the criteria for approval include a review of the Preconditions and the Common Standards, institutions that do not meet these criteria are not forwarded to the Commission for approval. Denial of initial institutional approval must, at this time, be based on inadequate or incomplete responses to the Commission's standards. Imposing

a penalty on an institution otherwise, absent the authority to do so, could potentially subject the Commission to litigation on the part of the institution.

The Commission directed staff to seek advice from legal counsel on the options available for sanctioning an institution for operating a program prior to initial institutional approval. In summary, legal staff's informal conclusion was that under the current provisions of California's Education Code sections 44370-44374 and the *Accreditation Framework*, if the preconditions and Common Standards for initial institutional approval have been met, the Commission grants initial approval. The Commission does not have authority to regulate whether an institution may begin offering an educator preparation program prior to receiving both initial institutional approval and program review approval; therefore, the Commission cannot deny initial institutional approval merely because the institution offered an educator preparation program prior to obtaining such approval.

At the August 2011 Commission meeting, the Commission also discussed the possibility of prohibiting an institution that had offered a non-approved educator preparation program, that is later approved, from recommending candidates that completed its program prior to approval. The Commission staff believes that the Education Code is silent on the matter of retroactively accepting or denying credential recommendations based on the initial institutional approval date. As a result, it is unclear whether the Commission, at this time, has the legal authority to prohibit an institution that is granted initial institutional approval and then program approval from recommending candidates for a credential for completing a program offered prior to those approvals. In light of this lack of clarity as to what program the candidates actually completed, the Commission could request that the institution provide assurance that the program that the candidates completed was indeed the same program that was eventually approved. Two possible options for gaining this assurance could be: 1) a signed statement acknowledging that the program is in fact the same as the program being approved, or 2) a site visit prior to approval.

This issue of accepting credential recommendations "retroactively" from the date of initial institutional and/or program approval is an understandable concern for the Commission. Because the Education Code does not specifically address this issue and because the Commission has no explicit policy at this time, the Commission's General Counsel was consulted on the steps that would be required should the Commission decide to develop new policy in this area. The General Counsel advised that there is a possibility that regulations would be necessary. Additional legal research would be necessary on this matter. If the Commission wishes to develop a policy that would prohibit any credential recommendations for candidates who completed the program prior to the date of initial institutional and program approval, Commission staff would return at a future Commission meeting with draft language for a policy prohibiting the awarding of credentials to any candidate who completed a program prior to initial institutional and program approval as well as the means to enact such a policy (statutory change, regulatory change, policy adoption). Commission staff welcomes direction in this matter.

Issue: The Sequence and Timing of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

The two-step approval process must be sequential in terms of actions taken by the Commission and the COA regarding the approval of the institution and of the preparation program(s) to be offered by the institution. However, most program sponsors submit responses to the

Preconditions and the two sets of standards (Common Standards and Program Standards) simultaneously to the Commission. It has been the Commission's practice to begin the review of all documents received as soon as feasible. In other words, the process for beginning the review of the response to the program standards is not held up until after the review of the General Preconditions and Common Standards is completed.

The Commission might wish to institute a strict sequential approach to the review process in which the responses to the Program Standards would be held for initial review until such time as the institution received Initial Institutional Approval. In that case, the *Accreditation Handbook* and information materials regarding the Initial Institutional Approval and the Program Approval process for new institutions would need to be clarified in this regard and all potential new program sponsors would need to be made aware of the process. Clarifications would be made to the *Accreditation Handbook* as well as to information on the Commission's Initial Institutional Approval webpage on the Commission's website for prospective program sponsors.

While this strict sequential approach would eliminate the possibility of any program's review being completed before the institution itself is approved as an approved program sponsor, it is also likely to significantly increase the time for approval and thus, the start-up time for the institution to offer the educator preparation program. This delay could certainly have an adverse impact on a school community that may have a need for the proposed program in a more timely manner. Currently, the initial institutional approval process typically takes 6-12 months. The program approval process also can range from 6-12 months. Because these are generally done in a parallel process, most institutions can begin operating an approved program within a year of submitting their documents. Under a potential new sequential approach, Commission staff estimates it could take up to 2 years to complete the entire initial institutional and program approval process for new institutions seeking to operating in California.

Short of enacting a strict sequential approach to the review process, staff has already initiated ways to better communicate the time expectations for initial institutional and program approval.

- The Commission's initial institutional approval page (<http://www.etc.ca.gov/educator-prep/new-program-submission.html>) now indicates that each of the two steps could take 6-12 months.
- The Commission's initial institutional approval page and related documents have been updated to more clearly indicate the review process involved, including a statement that emphasizes that formal action is needed first by the Commission and second by the Committee on Accreditation. It has also been clarified to explicitly mention that only once both the Commission and the Committee on Accreditation have taken formal action may the institution (approved program sponsor) recommend candidates for a California credential or certificate. While such a statement may not prevent an institution from offering a program prior to approval, it may help institutions have a more realistic expectation for the timelines involved in initial institutional and program approval.
- At the October 27, 2011 meeting of the COA, proposed edits and changes to the *Accreditation Handbook* were already scheduled to be discussed. Commission staff will propose additional clarifications to the appropriate sections of the *Accreditation Handbook* to ensure the timelines and expectations are more clearly delineated.

Issue: Clarification of Program Status Prior to Approval

Although it cannot prohibit institutions from offering courses or programs, the Commission may wish to take additional steps to discourage institutions from offering educator preparation programs prior to Commission initial institutional and COA program approval. Commission staff suggests that this could be done in two ways: 1) through the Intent to Submit Form, and 2) through a revision of Precondition 6.

Currently, an institution completes and submits an “Intent to Submit Form” prior to submitting the formal program proposal documentation. This form is intended for staff to better understand the number and type of proposals that will need to be reviewed. It allows staff to estimate when the proposals will arrive and how many reviewers will be needed, when, and with what type of expertise. Staff could add to this form a section that would ask institutions to indicate whether it is currently operating a non-approved educator preparation program in California. Currently, Commission staff has no way of knowing whether an unapproved program is operating unless it is brought to its attention in some manner. If the institution claims to be offering a program, the Commission could then follow up appropriately and formally with the institution.

The second possible manner in which to discourage institutions from offering a non-approved program is to revisit Precondition 6 – Commission Assurances. Currently, this precondition asks institutions to affirm that the program will follow standards; assure that the institution/district will cooperate in an evaluation of the program; and participate in reviews. The Commission could ask the institutions to indicate that they have not offered an educator preparation program or have not communicated to students in such a way that would lead them to believe they are operating an approved program prior to approval and that program will lead to a California credential.

If the Commission believes these to be viable options, staff could immediately change the Intent to Submit Form and bring back possible language for consideration to Precondition 6 for consideration by the Commission at a future Commission meeting.

Issue: Evaluating the Institutional Capacity of a Potential New Program Sponsor

Currently an entity (college, university, school district, county office of education or other entity) submits written responses to the Commission’s Preconditions and the Common Standards. When the narratives addressing the standards and preconditions adequately describe how the agency meets the Preconditions and the Common Standards and are accompanied by supporting documentation, staff recommends that the Commission approve the entity.

If the Commission believes that this current process – narrative responses to the Common Standards and Preconditions, accompanied by supporting documentation – are not adequate assurance of the infrastructure and leadership of an organization, additional processes could be considered. For example, a mini-site visit prior to Commission approval could allow an individual from the Board of Institutional Reviewers and a staff Consultant the opportunity to gather additional information. This additional step could be built into the initial institutional approval process for all institutions. However, it is difficult to determine what the site visit team would examine if the proposed program is actually not in operation. Further, this process could

be costly at a time when state budget constraints severely limit the amount of travel and the purposes for which travel may be approved.

Issue: Presenting Recommendations for Institutions for Initial Institutional Approval to the Commission

It has been suggested that perhaps more detailed information could be provided to the Commission relative to institutions seeking initial institutional approval. Currently, once reviewers have reviewed all responses to the Common Standards, course syllabi and other applicable documentation and have determined that the institution meets the standards based on thorough consideration of all available documentation, staff then prepares the agenda item. This agenda item includes: 1) a brief summary paragraph(s) about the institution; and 2) the Preconditions Review Worksheet, which summarizes the findings made by staff.

If the Commission would like to have more detailed or extensive information about an institutional applicant, Commission staff seeks direction on the types of information the Commission would like to have available prior to making a decision. Historically, the actual documentation of preconditions and standards responses has not been provided to the Commission but is available upon request. Short of providing very lengthy documents to the Commission, another alternative would be to include the reviewer feedback sheets with each agenda item.

It has also been suggested that the reviewers could be asked to acknowledge that they have read the materials and they have deemed the institution to have met all Common Standards. A significant challenge in having reviewers “sign off” and including that documentation with initial institutional approval documentation to the Commission in a public agenda item is that it would change the review process from one that is anonymous to one where the names of reviewers are revealed. This could have unintended consequences such as limiting the number of reviewers willing to assist the Commission with this process. Commission staff welcomes any feedback from Commissioners on this aspect of the review and approval process.

Next Steps

Staff seeks direction from the Commission as to further actions or activities relating to the issues discussed in this agenda item. Based on Commission discussion, staff would prepare agenda item(s) for future Commission meetings.

Appendix A

Table 1: Steps in California's Current Accreditation and Program Approval Process

Step I: Initial Institutional Accreditation: Eligibility to Offer a Program

A sponsor (e.g., institution of higher education, local education agency) that wishes to offer any credential programs must submit evidence that the entity meets the Education Code and Commission requirements to be a program sponsor.	On what basis is the institution or prospective program sponsor reviewed?	Who reviews the institution or prospective program sponsor's response?	Who approves the institution as a program sponsor?	Current Number of Eligible institutions
	Preconditions and the Common Standards	Preconditions: CTC Staff Common Standards: BIR members and trained peer reviewers	Commission	255 UC (8), CSU (23), AICCU (56), LEAs (165), and Other Sponsors (3)

Step II: Initial Program Approval*

The institution submits a program document that addresses all the appropriate program standards, evidence to support the program document and program specific preconditions. An institution may submit this program documentation at the same time as documentation is submitted for initial institutional approval or subsequent to receiving initial institutional approval.	On what basis are programs reviewed?	Who reviews the program document?	Who approves the program?	Current number of programs*
	Common Standards Addendum (if needed), Program-Specific Preconditions, and Program Standards	Trained teams of educators (K-12 and postsecondary) and CTC staff review the document. Questions are asked of the program sponsor as needed. Once all standards have been adequately addressed, a recommendation goes to the COA for program approval.	Committee on Accreditation only after the institution receives initial institutional approval by the Commission	Approximately 1015 (November 2010)

Step III: Ongoing Institutional Accreditation and Program Approval*

All institutions that offer approved educator preparation programs are reviewed through periodic site visits, program assessment and biennial reports. The institution submits documentation that addresses the Common Standards. Each approved program has submitted Biennial Reports and participated in Program Assessment process prior to a site visit. The site visit review team reads the documents prior to the visit. At the site visit, the review team collects data through interviews with candidates, completers, employers, faculty and other stakeholders. In addition, the review team reviews documents and evidence on site.	On what basis is the institution and all its programs reviewed?	Who reviews the institution and all its programs?	Who accredits the institution and all of its programs?
	Preconditions, Common Standards and all applicable Program Standards	Through a site visit, members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers make decisions on the Common Standards and all program standards and make a recommendation regarding accreditation to the COA.	Committee on Accreditation on behalf of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

* Does not include subject matter programs.

APPENDIX B

The Commission's Statutory Mandate Related to Accreditation of Educator Preparation Programs

The Commission's accreditation system is governed by three key documents: California Education Code, the *Accreditation Framework*, and the *Accreditation Handbook*. Education Code §§44370-44374 are critical to understanding the underlying philosophy, purpose, and duties of California's accreditation system, as these sections of the Code define specific objectives and responsibilities for California's accreditation system. The Commission's adopted policies that further describe the accreditation system constitute the *Accreditation Framework*. The *Accreditation Handbook* (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-handbook.html>), developed by the initial Committee on Accreditation, is the procedural manual for the system. Table 1 below illustrates the division of responsibility and authority for the Commission's accreditation system.

Table 1. Accreditation System Structure and Authority

Definition and Description of California's Accreditation System		
California Legislature ↓	Commission ↓	Committee on Accreditation ↓
State Law ↓	Commission Policy ↓	Procedural Implementation ↓
<i>Education Code</i> 44370-44374	<i>Accreditation Framework</i> (2007)	<i>Accreditation Handbook</i> (2010)

Education Code: Overview of Accreditation Objectives and Responsibilities

Education Code §44370 reflects the legislative findings and declarations related to accreditation, and reads:

The Legislature finds and declares that the competence and performance of professional educators depends in part on the quality of their academic and professional preparation. The Legislature recognizes that standards of quality in collegiate preparation complement standards of candidate competence and performance, and that general standards and criteria regarding the overall quality of a candidate's preparation are as essential as the assessment of the candidate's competence and performance.

The Education Code defines the objectives of the accreditation system. Section 44371 states that the system shall do all of the following:

- 1) Concentrate on the overall quality of educator preparation in credential programs.
- 2) Hold professional elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educators responsible for quality in the preparation of professional practitioners.
- 3) Contribute to improvements in educator preparation and recognize excellence in preparation programs and institutions.
- 4) Replace the prior system of program approval, as established by the Teacher Preparation and Licensing Act of 1970.
- 5) Be governed by an accreditation framework that sets forth the policies of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing regarding the accreditation of educator preparation.

The Accreditation Framework as Defined in Education Code

Education Code §44371(b) defines the purpose and objectives of the *Accreditation Framework*. It requires that the Framework do all of the following:

- 1) Establish broad, flexible policies and standards for accreditation of educator preparation.
- 2) Define the accreditation responsibilities, authority, and roles of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the Committee on Accreditation.
- 3) Establish an accreditation system that is efficient and cost effective.
- 4) Require that accreditation decisions be based on sufficient, reliable evidence about the quality of educator preparation.

Commission Responsibilities as Defined in Education Code

Pursuant to Education Code §44372, the Commission is responsible for oversight of the accreditation system and framework. Specifically, the Education Code delegates to the Commission responsibility to:

- 1) Adopt and implement an *Accreditation Framework*, which sets forth the policies of the Commission regarding the accreditation of educator preparation in California.
- 2) Establish and modify credential-specific standards, experimental program standards, and alternative program standards, as defined in the adopted *Accreditation Framework*.
- 3) Rule on the eligibility of an applicant for accreditation when the applying institution has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California, pursuant to subdivision (a) of §44227.
- 4) Appoint and reappoint the members of the Committee on Accreditation, in accordance with §44373, by selecting among nominees submitted by a panel of distinguished educators.
- 5) Review periodic accreditation reports by the Committee on Accreditation, and refer accreditation issues and concerns to the committee for its examination and response.

- 6) Hear and resolve appeals of accreditation decisions, pursuant to subdivision (e) of §44374.
- 7) Allocate resources annually for implementation of the accreditation system.
- 8) With the Committee on Accreditation, jointly design an evaluation of accreditation policies and their implementation, and jointly select an external evaluator to conduct the evaluation, in accordance with Section 8 of the accreditation framework that was in effect on June 30, 1993.
- 9) Modify the accreditation framework in accordance with Section 8 of the framework that was in effect on June 30, 1993.
- 10) Inform and advise the Legislature regarding statutory issues related to accreditation, and submit legislative recommendations, after considering the advice of the Committee on Accreditation, educational institutions, and professional organizations.

Committee on Accreditation Responsibilities as Defined in Education Code

In accordance with Education Code §44373(c), the COA is generally responsible for carrying out the policies enacted by the Commission and is responsible for accreditation decisions. Specifically, the Education Code requires that the COA shall do, but shall not be limited to doing, all of the following:

- 1) Make decisions about the accreditation of educator preparation. The committee's decision making process shall be in accordance with the *Accreditation Framework*.
- 2) Make decisions about the initial accreditation of new programs of educator preparation in accordance with procedures established by the committee.
- 3) Determine the comparability of standards submitted by applicants with those adopted by the Commission, in accordance with the *Accreditation Framework*.
- 4) Adopt guidelines for accreditation reviews, and monitor the performance of accreditation teams and other aspects of the accreditation system.
- 5) Present an annual accreditation report to the commission and respond to accreditation issues and concerns referred to the committee by the commission.

The Accreditation Framework and Accreditation Handbook

The current policies of the Commission relating to accreditation were adopted in 2006 and are contained in the *Accreditation Framework* (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/PDF/accreditation_framework.pdf.) The Commission's responsibilities are described in Section 1 of the *Accreditation Framework*. Most of the Commission's responsibilities are directly reflected from the language of the Education Code.

Section 2 of the *Accreditation Framework* defines the functions of the COA. The Committee on Accreditation is charged with the implementation of the accreditation system based on the policies the Commission has adopted.

The COA has over time developed the *Accreditation Handbook*. The *Accreditation Handbook* describes the procedural implementation of the accreditation system for institutions under

review, for educators that volunteer to be reviewers, and for others interested in California's accreditation system. The full text of the *Handbook* can be found at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-handbook.html>. The *Handbook* is routinely reviewed and revised as the system is maturing so that it provides the most current information for institutions and team members.

Appendix C

Common Standards

Standard 1: Educational Leadership

The *institution* and education *unit* create and articulate a research-based vision for educator preparation that is responsive to California's adopted standards and curriculum frameworks. The vision provides direction for *programs*, *courses*, teaching, *candidate performance* and experiences, *scholarship*, *service*, collaboration, and *unit* accountability. The *faculty*, *instructional personnel*, and relevant *stakeholders* are actively involved in the organization, coordination, and *governance* of all professional preparation *programs*. *Unit leadership* has the *authority* and *institutional support* needed to create effective strategies to achieve the needs of all *programs* and represents the interests of each *program* within the *institution*. The education *unit* implements and monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that *candidates* recommended for a credential have met all requirements.

Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation

The education *unit* implements an *assessment and evaluation system* for ongoing *program* and *unit evaluation* and improvement. The system collects, analyzes, and utilizes data on candidate and *program completion* performance and *unit* operations. *Assessment* in all *programs* includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to *candidate* qualifications, proficiencies, and *competence*, as well as *program* effectiveness, and is used for improvement purposes.

Standard 3: Resources

The *institution* provides the *unit* with the necessary budget, *qualified personnel*, adequate facilities and other *resources* to prepare *candidates* effectively to meet the state-adopted standards for educator preparation. Sufficient *resources* are consistently allocated for effective operation of each credential or *certificate* program for coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and *professional development*, instruction, *field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences*, and *assessment* management. Sufficient *information resources* and related personnel are available to meet *program* and *candidate* needs. A process that is inclusive of all *programs* is in place to determine resource needs.

Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel

Qualified persons are employed and assigned to teach all *courses*, to provide *professional development*, and to *supervise field-based and/or clinical experiences* in each credential and *certificate program*. *Instructional personnel* and *faculty* have current knowledge in the content they teach, understand the context of public schooling, and model best professional practices in teaching and learning, *scholarship*, and *service*. They are reflective of a diverse society and knowledgeable about diverse abilities, cultural, language, ethnic and gender diversity. They have a thorough grasp of the academic standards, frameworks, and accountability systems that drive the curriculum of public schools. They collaborate regularly and systematically with colleagues in *P-12* settings/college/university *units* and members of the broader, professional community to improve teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation. The *institution* provides *support* for *faculty* development. The *unit* regularly *evaluates* the performance of *course instructors* and *field supervisors*, *recognizes* excellence, and retains only those who are consistently effective.

Standard 5: Admission

In each professional preparation program, applicants are admitted on the basis of well-defined *admission criteria* and procedures, including all Commission-adopted requirements. *Multiple measures* are used in an *admission* process that encourages and *supports* applicants from diverse populations. The *unit* determines that admitted candidates have appropriate pre-professional experiences and personal characteristics, including sensitivity to California's diverse population, effective communication skills, basic academic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional effectiveness.

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements. The *institution* and/or *unit* provide *support* and assistance to candidates and only retains *candidates* who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

Standard 7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice

The *unit* and its *partners* design, implement, and regularly *evaluate* a planned sequence of *field-based* and *clinical experiences* in order for *candidates* to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and *support* all *students* effectively so that *P-12 students* meet state-adopted academic standards. For each credential and *certificate program*, the *unit* collaborates with its *partners* regarding the criteria for selection of school sites, effective *clinical personnel*, and site-based *supervising personnel*. *Field-based work and/or clinical experiences* provide *candidates* opportunities to understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching, and learning, and to help *candidates* develop research-based strategies for improving student learning.

Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors

District-employed supervisors are *certified* and experienced in either teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential. A process for selecting *supervisors* who are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards for students is based on identified criteria. *Supervisors* are trained in *supervision*, oriented to the *supervisory* role, *evaluated* and *recognized* in a systematic manner.

Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence

Candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and *support* effectively all *students* in meeting the state-adopted academic standards. *Assessments* indicate that *candidates* meet the Commission-adopted *competency requirements*, as specified in the program standards.

Appendix D

Preconditions

- (1) **Accreditation and Academic Credit.** To be granted initial institutional accreditation by the Commission to become eligible to submit programs or to be granted initial program accreditation or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program(s) must be proposed and operated by a college or university that (a) is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges or another of the six regional accrediting associations, and (b) grants baccalaureate academic credit or post baccalaureate academic credit, or both. (This provision does not apply to professional preparation programs offered by school districts.)

For school districts or other non-regionally accredited entities wishing to offer an educator preparation program, the Superintendent or CEO of the district or entity shall submit verification of the governing board's approval of sponsorship of the program. The agreement to sponsor a program must include verification of the following:

Once a candidate is accepted and enrolls in an educator preparation program, the sponsor must offer the approved program, meeting the adopted standards, until the candidate:

- i) completes the program,
- ii) withdraws from the program,
- iii) is dropped from the program based on established criteria, or
- iv) is admitted to another approved program to complete the requirements, with minimal disruption, for the authorization in the event the program closes. In this event, an individual transition plan would need to be developed with each candidate.

- (2) **Responsibility and Authority.** To be granted initial institutional/district accreditation by the Commission or initial program accreditation or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the institution/district shall provide the following information:

- (a) Identify the position within the organizational structure that is responsible for ongoing oversight of all credential preparation programs offered by the institution/district (including credential programs offered by the extension division, if any).
- (b) Provide a description of the reporting relationship between the position described in (a) and the individuals who coordinate each credential program offered by the institution/district. If a reporting relationship is indirect, describe the levels of authority and responsibility for each credential program.

- (3) **Personnel Decisions.** To be granted initial program accreditation or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, a program of professional preparation must be proposed and operated by an institution/district that makes all personnel decisions without considering differences due to gender or other constitutionally or legally prohibited considerations. These decisions include decisions regarding the admission, retention or graduation of students, and decisions regarding the employment, retention or promotion of employees.

- (4) **Demonstration of Need.** To be granted initial program accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program proposal must include a demonstration of the need for the program in the region in which it will be operated. Such a demonstration must include, but need not be limited to, assurance by a sample of school administrators that one or more school districts will, during the foreseeable future, hire or assign additional personnel to serve in the credential category.
- (5) **Practitioners' Participation in Program Design.** To be granted initial program accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program proposal must include verification that practitioners in the credential category have participated actively in the design and development of the program's philosophical orientation, educational goals, and content emphases.
- (6) **Commission Assurances.** To be granted initial program accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the program proposal must (a) demonstrate that the program will fulfill all of the applicable standards of program quality and effectiveness that have been adopted by the Commission; (b) assure that the institution/district will cooperate in an evaluation of the program by an external team or a monitoring of the program by a Commission staff member within four years of the initial enrollment of candidates in the program; and (c) assure that the institution/district will participate in focused reviews of one or more aspects of the program when designated by the Commission.
- (7) **Requests for Data.** To be granted initial or continuing accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation, the institution/district must identify a qualified officer responsible for reporting and respond to all requests from the Commission for data including, but not limited to, program enrollments, program completers, examination results, and state and federal reporting within the time limits specified by the Commission.

General Preconditions Established by State Law

- (8) **Faculty Participation.** Each postsecondary faculty member who regularly teaches one or more courses relating to instructional methods in a college or university program of professional preparation for teaching credentials, including Specialist Credentials, or one or more courses in administrative methods in an Administrative Services Credential program, shall actively participate in public elementary or secondary schools and classrooms at least once every three academic years. *Reference: Education Code Section 44227.5 (a) and (b)*
- (9) **California Basic Educational Skills Test.** In each program of professional preparation, applicants for program admission shall be required to take the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST). The institution shall use the test results to ensure that, upon admission, each candidate receives appropriate academic assistance necessary to pass the examination. *Reference: Education Code Sections 44252 (f) and 44225 (n)*

For Internship Programs: In each internship program of professional preparation, candidates who are admitted shall be required to pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test prior to assuming intern teaching responsibilities. *Reference: Education Code Section 44252 (b)*

Clarification of General Precondition 9

Legislative Intent. General Precondition 9 does not require passage of the CBEST for admission, only that the examination be taken. It is the intent of the Legislature that admission to a program not be denied solely on the basis of having failed to pass the CBEST. Further, it is expected that institutions will make provisions for assisting candidates in passing the exam.

Applicants Residing Out of State When They Apply for Admission. Persons residing outside of California when they apply for admission must take the CBEST no later than the second available administration of the test after enrolling in the program.

Candidate Qualifications. The standard requires that Multiple and Single Subject Credential (Program Standard 17) candidates must pass the CBEST prior to daily student teaching.

- (10) Certificate of Clearance.** A college or university that operates a program of professional preparation shall not allow a candidate to assume daily student teaching responsibilities until the candidate obtains a Certificate of Clearance from the Commission that verifies the candidate's personal identification, unless the individual has already completed the fingerprint and character identification process and has been issued a valid document by the Commission. *Reference: Education Code Section 44320 (d)*

For Internship Programs: A Certificate of Clearance must be obtained prior to assuming intern teaching responsibilities, intern counseling or psychologist responsibilities.